

IRELAND. [Appendix - II. Miscellaneous.]

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# AN ACCOUNT

OF

## THE CULTURE

OF

# POTATOES

*IN IRELAND.*

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A KNOWLEDGE of the methods of raising very early crops of potatoes, may, just at this time, be particularly desirable in many parts in England. These methods are known and practised by many people about London, who furnish the markets there with this root early in summer. I therefore do not think it necessary to enter into particular details about any of these methods. It may be here sufficient to observe, that some of them vary but little from the common modes of cultivating potatoes, except in choosing the earliest kinds for this purpose; in setting them in very warm situations, open only to the south, in January and February,

and loosely covering the beds, or drills, with long dung, every night, while there is danger of frost.

All the following directions are to be understood as relating to the culture of potatoes, not in the kitchen-garden, nor other small spots, but as a great article of field-tillage, productive of profit to the farmer, and of an abundant supply of food, such as it is, for the poorest classes of the people, through every season of the year.

To the production of an excellent crop of potatoes, the four following circumstances may be said, in general, to be necessary:—First, *good seed*;—secondly, *rich manure*;—thirdly, *suitable land*;—and fourthly, *proper cultivation*.

**First, GOOD SEED.** The real seed of potatoes is never sowed in Ireland by farmers.—Some curious gentlemen, and some gardeners, now and then sow it for the purpose of producing new varieties. Be the kind of potatoe, which produces the seed, what it may, he that sows it can never reckon on having the same species grow from it; but, on the contrary, may be certain that different varieties will result. This consideration (as well as the greater length of time, and the greater degree of labour and attention necessary to produce a crop from the seed, than from cuttings of the root) universally deters the Irish farmers from sowing what is, properly, the potatoe seed.

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The cuttings of potatoes are, therefore, every-where in this kingdom, used by the husband-men for the propagation of this plant; and, indeed, have generally obtained, among them, the name of "seed." Gentlemen differ from them, and call them, indifferently, cuttings, or sets. The best kinds of these sets are those which are procured by cutting out, what are called the eyes of the largest potatoes of the species chosen, taking care to have so much of the substance of the potatoe left to each eye, or bud, as may be sufficient to afford it nourishment for a short time, until the bud can throw out some shoots in the ground, and establish a fibrous root to feed the growing plant. For this reason, the very largest potatoes ought to be chosen to be cut up into sets. Experiments have proved, that the more of the substance of the potatoe is cut out with each eye, the stronger the first shoots of the plant will be, and the more vigorous will be its growth. No particular nicety is necessary, farther than to avoid having the knife run too close to the bud, or eye, in any part. By the common method of carelessly slicing off the eyes, the knife sometimes runs too close behind the bud. It is found by experience, that the prac-tice, too generally adopted in this country, of cutting up small potatoes into sets (a practice which first arose from a wish to save all the larger potatoes for food), ought to be no longer followed

followed there, nor imitated any-where ; for, all other circumstances being equal, the crops produced by large cuttings, from large potatoes, are always better than those which grow from thinly sliced cuttings of smaller potatoes. And it is still to be remembered, that the greater quantity of the substance of the potatoe left to each eye, the better. There is to be but one eye, or bud, on each cutting. Whatever part of the hearts of large potatoes may remain, after the eyes are thus cut out, will not be useless ; for, boiled, these hearts make very good food for hogs and poultry ; and eaten raw by horses and horned cattle, will prove highly nutritive. When the cuttings are thus made, care should be taken not to let them be laid up in such large heaps, nor to lie such a length of time over one another, as to hazard their heating.

Within these two or three years past, some experiments have been, it is said; successfully made, in the neighbourhood of Limerick, to show, that the white strings, as the farmers call them, or shoots thrown out in spring, by potatoes kept in houses or pits, may be substituted with safety for the cuttings commonly used ; whereby there would be a saving of the potatoes cut up for sets. This mode however, it is supposed, must, in all events, require some peculiar skill and attention ; and may not be so eligible to adopt, in the first instance, where the culture of

potatoes

potatoes is to be introduced, on a large scale, as an article of human sustenance. On such an occasion, no risk of failure should be run by experimental novelties. It is not doubted, but good crops, by proper management, may be produced from those fibrous shoots. But it is apprehended, that this method, on farther trial, will not be found to possess such superior advantages as to recommend it to general practice. It is feared too, that the advocates for it are not sufficiently aware, that, when potatoes are allowed to throw out such shoots as are necessary to use as a substitute for cuttings, they must be somewhat wasted ; and must be so far injured, as, thereby, to lose much of their nutriture and flavour.

The quantity of potatoe sets commonly allowed to an Irish acre, in the mode of cultivating them in beds by spade-tillage, is eight barrels of twenty-one stones, of fourteen pounds to the stone ;—that is, at the rate of five such barrels to the English acre. But less than half this quantity is sufficient when the potatoes are cultivated in drills.

Secondly, RICH MANURE. Every kind of manure, or compost, which ameliorates the soil, will be useful in the cultivation of potatoes ; but good rich dung is the best manure for them. Yet care is to be taken, by those who wish for dry, mealy potatoes, that too much rich dung

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be not used; for, when this is the case, the potatoes are usually wet. In some parts of England, those of such a close, tough texture, and so moist as to be denominated soapy or waxy, are preferred to the dry mealy potatoes so much esteemed in Ireland. The farmer who finds such waxy potatoes most in request, need not be afraid, even if the soil be rich, of using as much dung as he may wish. As this root has been commonly used in England hitherto, only as any other garden-vegetable, and dressed for the table in various ways, it has been of less importance to those who have eaten it, whether it was wet or dry; but those who shall come to use it as a succedaneum for bread, will soon be led to give a decided preference to the potatoe which is as dry as a well-baked loaf, to that which is as moist and tough as dough. The full quantity of dung commonly used to an Irish acre, is about what is equal to one hundred and sixty loads of an English one-horse cart, which is about the rate of one hundred such loads to the English acre.

Burn-baiting, whatever objection may be made to it, as to its pernicious effects on some kinds of lands, is an excellent preparation for potatoes. The ashes thus produced, when the land is pared of a tolerable thickness, are, in general, sufficient manure for a good crop of potatoes, even where the land is only of middling, or

or even poor quality. If the sod, or skin of the land, be but thinly pared, and the quantity of ashes consequently small, some other manure must be added.

Lime is also a good manure for potatoes. It will serve as such, either put out by itself, or mixed with good earth, so as to form a composition, which, in this country, is called mo-reen.

Sea-weeds are greedily collected by the farmers who live on the coasts, as manure for their potatoes. But this kind of manure must be covered, either with the plough or shovel, immediately; for, if suffered to lie exposed to the open air, it soon loses its manuring properties.

The various sorts of marl may be used. The richest kind, that which most abounds with calcareous earth, will be found to answer very well for potatoes, provided it be tolerably pulverized, and laid on the land in copious quantities.

Thirdly, **SUITABLE LAND.** A good rich loam, with a certain mixture of sand, is the best kind of soil for potatoes. Although a sandy loam is recommended, there cannot be an objection to the richest soil, except this, that the potatoes are apt to be wet in it. Where their being so is not disliked, the very richest land should be preferred. Sandy and light gravelly soils produce the driest potatoes; but not the

greatest quantity. In many parts of Ireland the land is found to be rich enough to produce good crops of potatoes without any manure at all, provided it has lain in grass untilled for many years, and has become what is called an old ley. It may be said, all soils that are tolerably dry, by the aid of good dung, or other proper manure, and careful culture, will produce very profitable crops of potatoes.

Fourthly, PROPER CULTIVATION. *The first and simplest method* to be mentioned, is what is called the lazy-bed method. It can be practised with prudence only in old ley-land. Old meadows and very rich pastures are best; and it is only on such lands that this mode can be pursued with success. In February or March, the ley is marked out in straight beds of an even breadth, with spaces or intervals laid out between them for trenches. The width of the beds may be chosen from three feet and an half to five feet, according to the nature of the soil. If it be but shallow, the beds ought to be narrow, as there could not be good mould enough procured out of trenches of moderate breadth, in such a soil, sufficiently to cover the beds, unless they were narrow. If the good mould be deep, the beds may be laid out the wider, but still should never exceed five feet. The breadth of the trenches, according to this mode of tillage, should be somewhat more than the third part of that of

of the beds: for the potatoes require more mould to cover them when thus planted, than in any other way.

When the beds and the spaces for the trenches are thus laid out by a long line, and marked with a spade, the dung, or other manure, should be spread evenly over the strips of ground laid out for the beds.—Then some boys or girls are to be employed in laying the potatoe sets on the manure, so spread, at equal distances, as nearly as the eye can judge. The best distance for these sets to be placed from each other, is from nine inches to a foot every way. Then the sods are to be pared off the narrow spaces marked for trenches, and chopped by the spade, then thrown over the potatoe cuttings; after which, a shallow spit of the mould is thrown from the trenches on the beds, over the chopped sods, to form the first covering for the sets. Half of each bed is to be covered still, from that half of the trench which is nearest to it. When the plants have risen about two inches above the surface of this first covering, another shallow spit is to be thrown out of the trenches over them; and when they appear above the surface a second time, they are once more to be earthed by spade and shovel. In this last earthing, the sides of the trenches are to be pared a little, and made quite even; and the bottom of them so cleaned, by

the shovel, as not to leave any of the staple mould behind.

Some farmers, instead of digging the last spit in the trenches, loosen the mould by running through them a skeleton plough, drawn by one strong horse, or, if the ground be stiff, by two horses, one before the other (this is a common plough without its mould-board); and then shovel up the earth thus loosened. Where there is any danger, on account of the shallowness of the soil, of stirring, by the second digging of the spade, the under-stratum of bad clay, this mode of ploughing the trenches is to be followed; for there should be the utmost care taken, not to throw up any of the barren clay, or sour, hungry sand or gravel, that sometimes will be found to lie within reach of the spade in digging the second spit. The farmers in this country use an expressive word for the mischief such poor clay, or other pernicious substratum does, when thrown on the surface—they say, it “poisons the ground.”

Whether it be the spade that shall be used, or the skeleton plough, for loosening the mould in the trenches for the last earthing, the last dressing, in either case, is to be given by the shovel from the sides and bottom of the trenches, which are thereby to be made to look neat, and clear of all loose mould.

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Thus all the necessary operations of this method of cultivating potatoes will be finished, except merely a little attention to keep the beds free from weeds. The circumstance of earthing the beds, at two different times, after the plants first appear, tends very much to suppress weeds; and, by the rapid growth of the potatoe plants themselves, after the last covering, they soon get the mastery of any weeds that attempt to spring up after the first weeding. However, such weeds as shall, at any time, appear among the potatoe plants, it will be right to eradicate as soon as they are fit to be pulled. The best time for this work is immediately after rain. It is always easy to get at the weeds in such beds as have been described, without at all hurting the young potatoe plants, by having the weeders go along the trenches, into which the weeds may be dropped when pulled: and, as no bed is ever to exceed the breadth of five feet, the weeders, even if boys or girls, can always conveniently weed to the centre of each bed.

When ley land has potatoes thus planted in it, the farmer will do well to keep it in potatoes the next year also; as the sods, or what is called the skin of the ground, will by that time be so completely rotten, as to operate as a supply of excellent manure; and the soil, by the second year's potatoe tillage, will be more completely pulverized, and brought into fine tilth.

tilth for corn, than it possibly could be in the first year.

In laying out the beds the second year, care should be taken to have the trenches where the centre of the beds was the first year; and, consequently, the centre of the beds where the former trenches were. This interchange the more effectually loosens the soil, and more perfectly prepares it for after-crops of corn.

It should be here mentioned, that it is an improvement in the lazy-bed culture of potatoes, to lay out the beds and trenches in the winter, or, at latest, in February; and as soon as they are laid out, to dig the trenches as deep as the good mould goes, turning the sods down to the bottom, and chopping them with the spade. The sods and mould of the trenches so mixed, and lying together, until the potatoes are set, will be in fine condition to throw up on the beds.

*A second method* (and indeed a better one, and which should always be preferred to that already described, if it suits the convenience of the farmer) is, to plough up the ley ground intended for potatoes, some time in the winter, or as early as possible in the spring—but the sooner the better—into beds of the breadth intended for the potatoe beds. Seven feet, from the centre of one furrow to the centre of the next, is, in general, where the soil is tolerably deep, a proper breadth. If the soil is shallow,

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the breadth should be less. Care must be taken to have this ley eaten down very bare, before the plough is sent into the field. The ploughing ought to be performed in a complete husband-like manner, so as that the sods, when turned by the plough, shall all lie quite flat, with the green side downward, and so as that no grass at all may be seen. When the ploughman begins to turn the two centre sods of each bed, he must be mindful to allow so much room, and to leave such a space untouched by the plough, as will be just sufficient to receive these two centre sods laid down flat, and not to have the second of them ride, or overtop the other. Thus they will exactly cover the unploughed strip in the middle of the bed. Then every succeeding sod, when turned over by the plough, will lie flat in the space from which the preceding sod was turned off.

When the beds are all ploughed, a harrow is to be drawn along them, to smooth any inequalities, and to fill up the open seams where the edges of the sods meet. When thus ploughed, and levelled by the harrow, the land is to remain so until the due time for putting in the potatoe sets. If the land be ploughed as early as it ought to be, the grass sods will be by this time rotted, and turned into a kind of manure. Some superadded manure will, however, be necessary; and, in this case, well-rotted, short, rich

rich dung is to be preferred, if it can be obtained.—But whatever the manure may be, it will be best to have it drawn out on the beds as soon as the farmer thinks it time to stick in his potatoe sets. It is to be laid down from the carts at convenient distances, a part of the load in one place, and a part in another, for the greater facility of spreading it equally on the beds. The quantity of dung, or other manure, necessary, must always depend on the quality of the land ; for, in proportion as this is poor or rich, more or less will, obviously, be proper and necessary to use. It is to be understood, of course, that not only the state of the soil, but also the quality of the manure itself, is to be taken into consideration, in estimating the quantity that may be wanted. It need not be remarked, that the better the manure the less will be sufficient. Supposing all other circumstances equal, there will not be so much manure necessary to be laid out on land which had been thus ploughed into beds for some time, as is mentioned for potatoes set in the first method, because the beds in this second method have the advantage of having the sods already rotted into a sort of half-formed dung.

If the land thus managed be a rich old pasture, or meadow-land, when broken up it will produce a very good crop of potatoes without any manure, provided it be ploughed two or three

three months before the time of putting in the sets.

The potatoe sets are thus to be put into these beds: Each labourer is to be furnished with a coarse apron, or a short white bag, tied before him, into which the sets are put. With a spade he makes an opening in the bed, by merely thrusting it into the ground, and then pushing it forward, while sticking in the earth, with his left hand; while with his right hand he throws a set, or cutting, down into the interstice thus kept open to receive it. The spade is then withdrawn, and then the cut will close almost entirely over the potatoe set. The spade commonly used in Ireland for this purpose, is different from the English spade—It has a step only at one side, to answer to the right foot. The iron is narrow, not more than half the width of the English spade—Hence it is a lighter instrument. It has a straight handle, nearly five feet long above the iron. The whole length of the iron and handle is six feet. Irish labourers, working with this kind of spade, are not obliged to stoop so much as English labourers are, with their short-handled spades. The depth of the cleft made for the potatoe set, or cutting, is just as far as the spade will readily penetrate, by one exertion of the right foot on the step. The peasants in this country, both men and women, as also the boys and girls, above the age

of fourteen or fifteen, have acquired great expertness in putting the potatoe sets into the ground, in this way; and, therefore, perform this part of the work very rapidly. The openings, or clefts, to receive the sets, are made at regular distances, in a line across the bed. Five sets will be enough in the breadth of a bed five feet wide—this allows the sets to be about eleven inches asunder, in that direction. A new line of openings, or clefts, is to be then made, at the distance of about a foot from the former; and so on, row after row across, until the bed be finished. Sixteen men or women are the usual number necessary for thus planting (as it is called) an Irish acre of potatoes. This is the same proportion as ten labourers to an English acre.

A harrow should be drawn along the beds to close the spade-cuts, immediately after they have received the potatoe sets.

In some parts of Ireland, instead of spades, short sticks, with one end sharpened, are used, to make openings to receive the potatoe sets, with a step fixed for the foot to force the stick into the ground, to make the necessary apertures: but the method of making them by the spade is better, as it loosens the ground more.

If the farmer be much hurried, and cannot cart out the dung, or other manure, for the potatoes, at the time they ought to be set, he may

get the cuttings stuck in before the manure be drawn out on the field; and he need not be uneasy from an apprehension that material injury will result to the crop from his delaying, for even a week or ten days, to draw it out over the beds thus previously "seeded" (as the farmers term it) with potatoe cuttings; for horses and light carts may be allowed to go over the beds until the plants are nearly breaking through the surface. Yet it is, decidedly, the better way to have the manure, of whatever kind, spread on the beds before the sets are stuck in; for carting it out afterwards must always, in some degree, harden the ground—a circumstance which ought to be avoided as much as possible.

The next thing to be done is, to cover the beds thus "seeded," with mould out of the furrows, which should, previously, have a plough run up and down in each of them, to loosen the mould, to have it ready to be shovelled up on the beds; which is to be done as soon as it can be accomplished, that the dung, or other manure, may not lose any part of its strength by being too long exposed to the sun and winds. Afterwards, the furrows are to be cut out into regular, handsome trenches, by having their sides pared down with spades, and the bottom levelled and cleared, whereby there will be obtained a sufficient quantity of mould to give a covering to the plants after they rise about two inches over the first covering thrown up from

the furrows : but great care is still to be taken not to go too deep in the trenches, nor to throw up any other than good mould. The trenches, in this mode of culture, will not require to be as wide in proportion to the breadth of the beds, as in the first mode, because the beds will not require, in this way, as much earth to be thrown on them. In this way the sets are put into the ground below the surface ; and in the former, they are laid over the surface, which is the reason that in this way they do not want so much mould from the trenches as in the other.

When a poor Irish peasant has an acre, or half an acre, of ley-land, to set potatoes in, and does not chuse to trust to the lazy-bed culture, if he cannot hire or borrow a plough to turn it up, he digs it all with a spade, and then sticks in the potatoe cuttings in the manner already described. This method is still better than ploughing the ground, as it loosens it more ; but it is too expensive to be adopted as a general practice.

*A third method* is, to plant potatoes on stubble ground, ploughed into beds, as in the second method. Stubble ground not being so rich, nor having so much strength as old ley-land, freshly broken up, will require more manure. And it will be best to have the manure, of whatever kind, spread on the stubble, and have it ploughed into the land, as early in the spring as may be

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convenient. In the proper season the potatoe sets are to be stuck in, according to the directions already given, and twice covered by mould taken out of the furrows (which are to be made into trenches) in the manner mentioned in the second method.

It is to be understood, as an universal rule, that the more ploughings and harrowings the land broken up for the production of potatoes receives, previous to their being set in it, and the more intimately the manure be mixed with the soil, the greater will be the crops, and the more profitable also; for the extra produce obtained will more than repay the expence of the additional ploughings and harrowings, and the ground will be in the finer tilth for corn after the potatoes are taken out.

*A fourth method* of setting potatoes, and the last that shall be here mentioned, is that of having them in drills, which is the method that appears most likely to come into general use in England, as it has many advantages over the culture of them in beds, by the spade. It requires fewer hands, a great object to the farmer even in Ireland, but still greater in England, where labourers are not so numerous, and where their wages are higher. Less manure is necessary, which is another great object to the farmer: therefore, for the same expence, not only more potatoes can be produced, but also more land, after the potatoes are gotten out, will be in fine order to receive

corn.

corn. If it does not suit the convenience of the farmer to sow wheat in the potatoe ground immediately after the potatoes are taken out, which is the common practice in Ireland where the land is tolerably good, it will, after one ploughing and harrowing in the spring, be in good condition for barley. In the poor and mountainous parts of Ireland, oats are sown in potatoe ground, and the best oats are produced in this way.

Stubble land is the fittest for drill potatoes. As soon as it may be practicable for the farmer to do it, he ought to plough the stubble intended for this purpose, and get it ploughed as well as possible, filling up the old furrows, if any be, and making the ground level. The land is to lie in this way during the winter. The first dry weather it is to be harrowed, and then immediately cross-ploughed, still having care taken not to plough or harrow it when wet. It will be proper to give this second ploughing with a turn-wrist plough, so as to lay the sod all one way. This is not essentially necessary, but saves subsequent trouble in laying the ground smooth. Soon afterwards it is to be harrowed again, and made level, so as to be fit to be laid out in drills. It is hardly necessary to mention, because it is obvious, that if there is any acclivity in the ground, the drills must run directly up and down, for otherwise, one side of the drills could not be sufficiently moulded by the plough. But if the ground be quite flat, or nearly so, and the form of its

its boundaries will conveniently admit them to run so, the best line for the drills to run in, will be nearly north and south, that the plants may have the greater benefit of the sun.

The drills may be conveniently made by a plough going once, and returning in the furrow; in which case the mould-board will lay the earth, first on one side, and then on the other. They are to be made as deep as the soil will allow, and perfectly straight. They are to be made at such distances (suppose four feet asunder) as to make it convenient repeatedly to earth the potatoes afterwards by the plough.

The boys or girls employed to put in the sets, may be dropping them into the drill as soon as it is completed by the second passage of the plough. The sets may thus be laid within six inches of each other in the drills, as the potatoes will have much room to spread on both sides in the intervals between the drills. The men laid out for this work, must then immediately begin to cover the sets with dung, or some rich compost. As to the necessary quantity, and the most convenient arrangement for the distribution of the manure, the farmer's own judgment will be the best guide. It would here be equally tedious and useless, to enter into particular directions and minute details on this part of the business. If dung, or some rich compost, cannot be had, let the fallow be well limed, and good crops will be produced. As to covering the drills after they

they are furnished with the sets and manure, different methods are pursued. Some cover the drills by running the plough up on one side, and down on the other, thus turning the mould in upon the drill. Others run a harrow across the drills, first bushing it, to prevent the pins from entering the ground too deeply: for, without some such precaution, the manure and the sets would be disturbed. There is another method which is thought the best. It is to fill up the drills with a narrow board about four feet long, which need not be more than four or five inches wide, with a handle fastened to it like the handle of a rake. By this instrument the mould is drawn, with ease and expedition, over the drills; and the ground made quite level, without any risk of displacing the sets. In rich, deep land, the drills may be closer than in middling soils.

When the plants rise a little above the surface, they are to be earthed on both sides of the drills, and as the potatoes still shoot up, they are to be earthed on each side from the intervals. The farmers, in many parts of England, are so much accustomed to the drill husbandry, that little or no instructions can be necessary to them as to the mode of earthing up potatoes in this way. But it may be right here to make a general remark, which is, that they ought to be earthed three or four times. They may continue to be earthed until they are in blossom, or as long as the intervals will afford mould.

After

After the last earthing is thus given, the intervals should resemble the intervals between the rows of celery in a kitchen garden, when they are completely earthed up to be blanched; and the furrow in the centre of the interval should be quite as deep as the good mould. During the growth of the potatoes in drills, as well as in every other way, care must be taken to have them kept clean.

About the middle of October, generally, all potatoes, that have been set in March or April, are fit to take out of the ground. Those not set sooner than May, will require to remain in the earth until November. Yet much must always depend on the circumstances of the season. While they continue in a state of vigorous vegetation, they ought not to be stirred. The first smart frosty night that occurs after Michaelmas is sure to nip them, and then their leaves suddenly turn from a fine green to a dirty dark brown, and wither. The farmer should now lose no time, but instantly set about taking the potatoe roots out of the ground.

It may be proper to remark here, that, if necessary, some of the potatoes may be dug so early as the beginning of July, and so continue to be dug out in small quantities, as wanted by a family, until they are all ripe, and fit to be taken out in October or November, to be laid up for the winter.

If they are in beds, they are to be dug out with

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spades.

spades. None of the stalks ought to be pulled until the labourers go into the field to work, nor more than may be necessary at a time; for the stalks are some protection to the roots (particularly while their leaves remain on them) against the frosts. All possible care should be taken to prevent severe frosts overtaking the potatoes in the ground, especially those sorts which rise near the surface. When labourers are difficult to procure, and the farmer is in a great hurry to get wheat into the potatoe land, and the potatoes themselves into the house or pit, out of the power of frosts, a plough may be used to take them out: but out of beds the plough cannot take them so effectually as the spade. However, by attention in the ploughing, and afterwards having a boy with a basket to follow the plough when the ground is ploughed again for the wheat, or other corn that may be sowed in it, to pick up any potatoes that may appear in this second ploughing, very few will be lost or left in the ground.

When the potatoes are in drills, it is always by a plough they are taken out. Some farmers run the plough lengthways, first on one side, and then on the other side the drill, so as completely to open it, so that the potatoes may be picked out. But others run a turn-wrist plough across the drills, turning the mould all one way, and, of course, down the declivity, if there be any in the ground. By this method there is as much

much as the plough can turn over at once cut off by it from the ends of all the drills, and opened out, so as to have the potatoes gathered.

Dry weather should be chosen for the operation of getting them out of the ground, whatever method be followed; and care is to be taken to have them put up dry, either in gravelly pits out of doors, where no water can lodge, well covered with layers of straw, sods, and clay, or in barns, or other out-houses, where care is also to be taken that they be protected by thick layers of straw under them, around them, and over them, and the place they are deposited in made so close, as that neither frost nor wind can affect them. That frost is injurious to potatoes is known wherever potatoes are known; but that wind is also very injurious to them, is not so generally known, though equally true. Frost however is the more dangerous enemy.—It must, at all events, be barred out; and the door must also be shut in the wind's face, that the potatoes may remain safe.

The method of keeping potatoes is in pits, not too large; for when the pit is opened, it is adviseable to take out the whole quantity buried, and bring it into the house. I observe the country people have several pits in the field; they are generally five feet deep, straw or thatch at the bottom, and also on the top of the potatoes, then a heap of earth, higher than what is usual over a grave, beat firm, and formed into a ridge,

ridge, both to carry off water and protect from frost. Potatoes never can be good in the way they are dressed in England, paring them like turnips before they are put into the pot. The way here, is to wash them well in cold water, so that all the earth may be taken off, and then boil them rather slow; the woman in the cottage sorts them, that they may be boiled even, uses the large one day, and the small another, and frequently throws in a little cold water, when she apprehends the pot might boil too suddenly. Potatoes in perfection should, when used young, be firm and waxy; when let come to maturity, very dry and farinaceous—then they are fine and wholesome food. There seems to be a bad kind propagated about London: our family could never meet with any good there last summer; we were obliged to leave them off; they were always soft and watery, and in that state they are certainly unwholesome. In our house here, they are boiled in steam, and I observe they are very dry, and people generally commend them.

Potatoes, like all other plants, will degenerate in time, by being continually propagated from cuttings. There is no remedy for this, but sowing the seed: that requires patience and time; and, out of a vast quantity, you may get but a few kinds worth preserving and propagating.

THE END.

